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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8626
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1360
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 1607
RUEHMA/AMEMBASSY MALABO 0269
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 0429
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
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DEPT FOR AF/C, DS/IP/AF, DS/DSS/CC
NDJAMENA PLEASE PASS TO DAS SWAN

E.O. 12958: n/a

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [CM](#)

SUBJECT: CAMEROON: RIOTS AND TAXI STRIKE STILL IN FORCE

REF: (A) YAOUNDE 0190 (B) YAOUNDE 0121 (C) YAOUNDE 0182

¶1. (U) Embassy Yaounde convened the Emergency Action Committee at 08:30am local time on February 27 to discuss the security situation throughout the country and to reaffirm the hold-fast travel policy in place for USG employees and other American citizens throughout the country. In attendance were AMB, DCM, RSO, DAO, POL, MGT, CONS and PA. The EAC reconvened at 3:00pm.

¶2. (U) The reports of violence, looting and burning in various parts of the country continued through the night of February 26-27. Late on February 26, the National Taxi and Transporters Union and the GRC signed an agreement to end the taxi strike and reduce gas prices by 5 FCFA (1 US cent), far short of the taxi drivers' demands. As a result the taxi and transporter strike continues in much of the country. There were a few taxis operating in Yaounde however by 10am local time they stopped operating. In the North and Far North Province the taxi drivers did not participate in the strike as most of their gas tends to be smuggled from Nigeria.

¶3. (U) There are reports that strikers in Douala have concentrated their efforts to prevent gas-tank trucks from traveling from Limbe through Douala to supply gas to other parts of the country. Some pharmacies and bakeries in the upscale neighborhoods of Douala are open for limited hours to allow the population to purchase needed items. On February 27, helicopters flew over Douala to monitor two youth demonstrations. There is currently no water in Douala because according to the national water company SNEC (Societe Nationale des Eaux du Cameroun) authorities are unable to get chlorine to clean the water. Two US companies in Douala are evacuating their staff. The most troublesome areas continue to be Douala in the Littoral Province and Baffoussam in the West Province. There are unconfirmed reports that two people were killed in Baffoussam in direct confrontation with security forces. In most cities shops and gas stations remain closed.

¶4. (U) The highway connecting Douala and Yaounde is still blocked by demonstrators. The Douala airport is open with regularly scheduled flights from the major airlines. Despite the opening of Douala airport, passengers continue to face difficulties leaving the airport due to security concerns.

¶5. (U) Since February 27, there has been an increase in rioting and looting around the markets in downtown Yaounde. In several neighborhoods, including the upscale neighborhood of Bastos (where Embassy employees reside), gun shots have been heard. The company Le Bus, in Yaounde, recalled all urban buses due to security problems. For a short while, Peace Corps staff located in the Omnisport area of Yaounde was unable to leave their offices due to riots.

Embassy Actions

¶6. (U) The Embassy continues to reinforce no inter-city travel throughout Cameroon. The Embassy has issued a Warden Message discouraging American Citizens from traveling in Yaounde until the situation is brought under control. The American School in Douala remains closed. On February 25, the American School of Yaounde cancelled all afternoon activities and due to the deteriorating security situation in Yaounde, it closed early on February 27 and will remain closed on February 28. The Ambassador held a town hall meeting to update personnel about the Embassy situation.

¶7. (U) The Consular Section has suspended all non- emergency service indefinitely and has borrowed other Embassy personnel to staff a control room- phone number (237) 2220-1500 x 4033, e-mail YaoundeACS@state.gov. Consular personnel have advised Americans in Douala, Yaounde and the Littoral, West, SouthWest, and North West Provinces not to leave their residence due to widespread unrest. The Consular Section remains in close contact with wardens and are tracking the situation of American Citizens throughout the country (estimate: 2000) particularly the approximately 50 individuals who have some interest in evacuation. The Consular Section is currently handling a rapidly growing number of calls from families that are inquiring about evacuation plans and options.

GARVEY